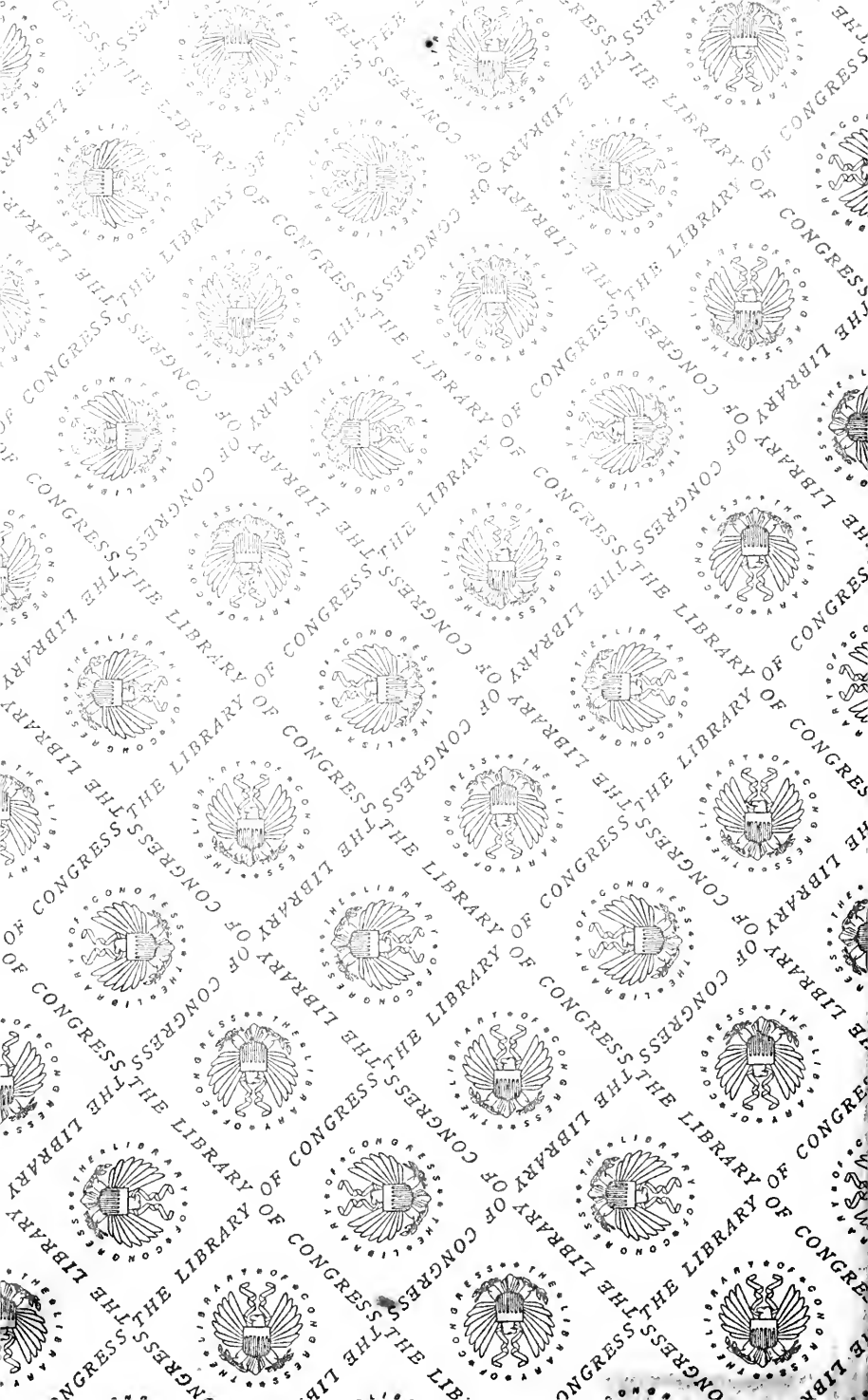
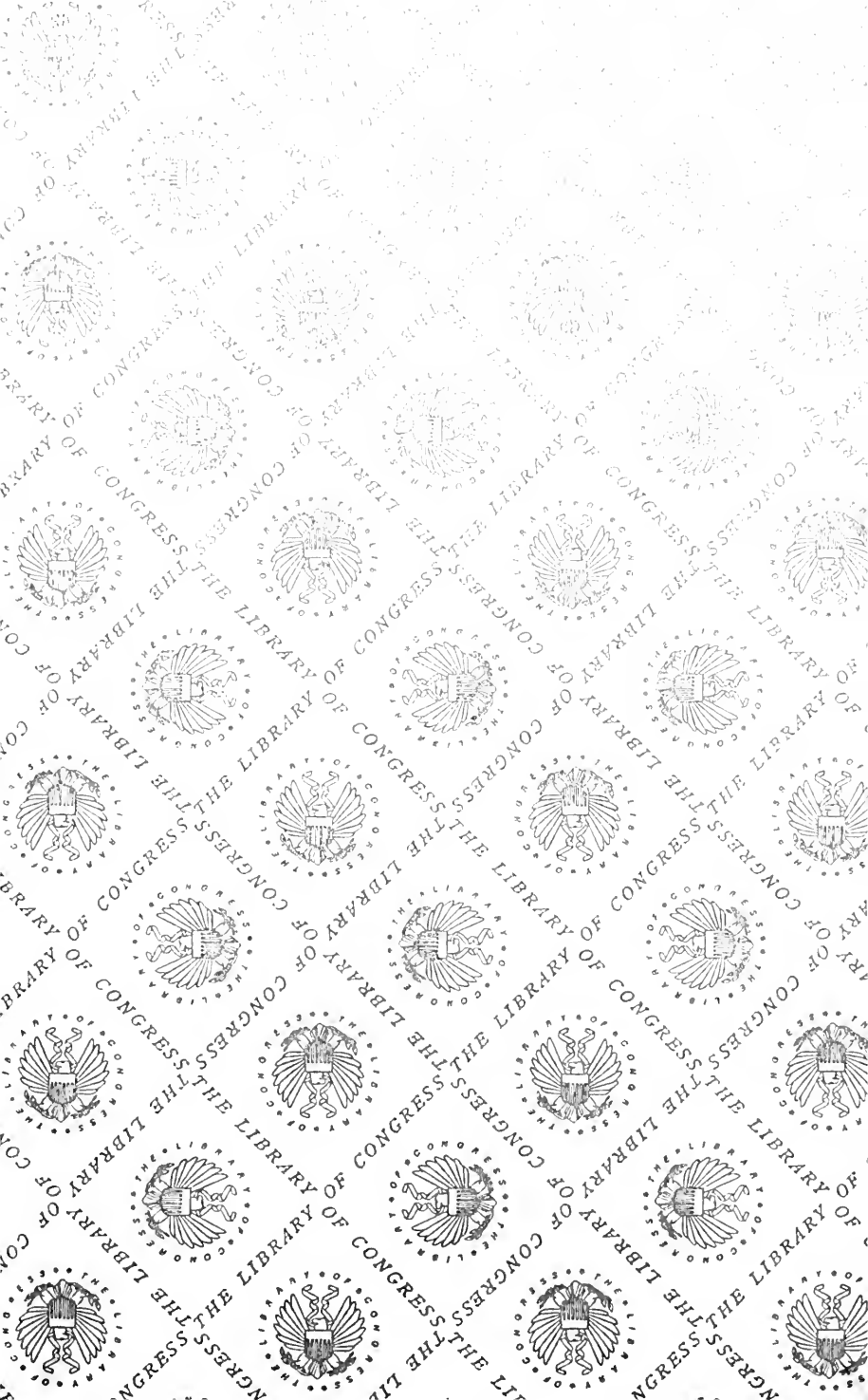


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## THE HAPPY TEACHER



THE  
HAPPY TEACHER

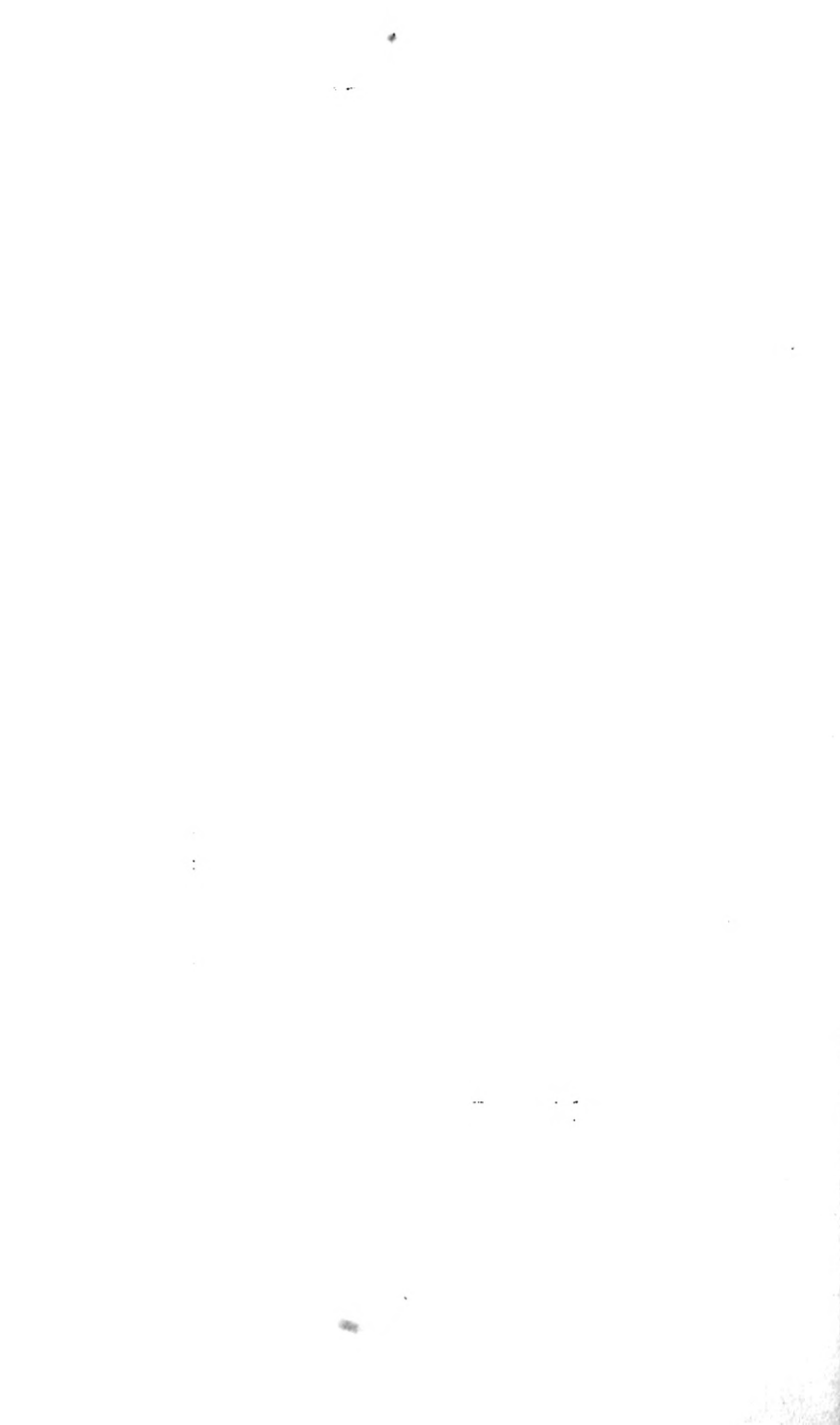
BY  
MELVILLE B. ANDERSON

NEW YORK  
B. W. HUEBSCH

1910

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TO  
THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO  
WERE MY STUDENTS  
AND THROUGH WHOM I WAS A LEARNER  
MDCCCLXXVII—MCMX



## AUTHOR'S NOTE

THIS poem was read before the Phi Beta Kappa Society at Leland Stanford Junior University, May 21, 1910, at which time the author commenced *emeritus*.





# THE HAPPY TEACHER

## I

Who is the Happy Teacher?—Represent  
In his dimensions like himself, O Muse,  
His very effigy, his lineament  
Essential: yet, as painters ever use,  
Portray the happy guide of noble youth  
Ideally,—that is with inward truth!

Thus without due premeditation  
Invoking with rash utterance  
The Muse (presumptuous son of Earth,  
Daring to summon as a slave  
The Goddess of celestial birth!),  
I head my pinnacle to the wave;  
But, look you! not a zephyr blows  
To clear us from the lee of prose:

## THE HAPPY TEACHER

---

“Be brisk there, hearties, man the oar,  
And make a shift to pull off shore!”

Lo! scarcely under steerage-way,  
I feel a presence at the prow,—  
A thrilling voice commands me “Stay!”  
We drop the oars, our heads we bow.  
“Follow,” the Goddess bids, “the trace  
Of him who utter’d nothing base;  
Let Wordsworth be thy pilot, for  
He sang the Happy Warrior.”

“Be it far from thee to advise  
Me emulate that lofty song,  
O Muse!—What verse-craft could disguise  
My fragile foil’d against his strong?  
Ah! cap and bells should crown th’ em-  
prise.  
I cannot string Ulysses’ bow,  
My grasp too weak, my reach too low.”

The Muse's answer how rehearse  
In rime thus unheroic?—Terse  
And stern to this effect she spake:  
“What boots it weigh the form of verse?  
Doth not the soul the body make?  
Deep counsel with thy Spirit take!  
Thence streams the right afflatus,—storm  
Of living utterance: for form  
(Her voice was edged with some disdain)  
If any poet there remain  
Yet uninform'd with instinct,—well,  
Let him aspire to doggerel!”

The message,—if a little tart  
Tonic the more,—I take to heart;  
With trembling hand I string the lyre,  
And, prompted by that sneer, aspire:  
Touchstone will chuckle, if he hark it,  
“Right butterwomen's rank to market!”

Beginning, plunge we if you please,  
As Horace bids, *in medias res*,—

## THE HAPPY TEACHER

---

Words signifying *Quite at random*,  
As easy writers understand 'em;  
And if we treat, not as we ought to,  
Of what the Happy Teacher 'll not do,  
The Muse may later bid us pen her  
A rime less negative in tenor.

He will not break the bruised reed  
Which feebly lifts its little spire;  
Nor will he quench the smoking  
flax  
Where Genius yet may burst to fire;  
The hungry he'll not underfeed,  
Weak appetite not overtax.

He will not strive to loose or bind  
The bands that starr'd Orion wove;  
Precept may shake, not sever these  
Ethereal cables knit with love:  
Sweet influences of the mind  
Immortal as the Pleiades.

## FUNDAMENTALS

---

Counter to Mother Nature's course  
Task not the heart, nor cudgel brain  
Genial propensity to quell;  
Thou'lt have thy labor for thy pain:  
Inevitable thy remorse,  
O sire of Richard Feverel!

His basic principle thus flows  
When set to music; but to those  
Who treat the soul as a machine,  
Small reason in the rime is seen.  
Their schools and systems, all and some,  
Seem founded on the axiom  
That gear of clock-work can direct  
The engine of the intellect.  
They deem, like alchemists of old,  
To find in their retorts the gold,  
Blind to the true transmuting stone,  
Only to Nature's bantlings known.  
The spirit bloweth and is still:  
Come, harness it to turn our mill!

## THE HAPPY TEACHER

---

No teacher, but mechanic tool,  
Who, when the angel moves aright  
The waters of Bethesda's pool,  
Would thermograph them by some rule  
Of Réaumur or Fahrenheit.

Our happy Guide, of Socrates'  
Athletic school, distrusts degrees.  
Why dub the graduated ass  
Whose *ne plus ultra* is to pass,  
Honorificabilitudinitas?  
O runner, fling aside the crutch!  
Is his monition; overmuch  
Our Capuan schools abound in aids,  
Diplomas, titles, badges, grades:  
Why titillate with bait so slight  
The hungry edge of appetite?  
Why tempt the torpid? Fat of rib  
Is fat of wit: shut up the crib!

When from the mint the gold of Burns,

## FRIPPERY

---

Crisp with the guinea-stamp, returns,  
The gold's the gold, we understand,—  
Yet how the better for the brand?  
When did promotion come to knowledge  
From furbelows aflounce at college?  
Amid the courtiers glittering  
Stood rusty Franklin less a king?  
To boys leave bagatelles! Pray, what  
Avail'd the doctor's hood to Watt?  
If, pamper'd like an Oxford don,  
The cause that made him lean forgone,  
And dubb'd D. D., how more divine  
Had been the Poet Florentine?  
Shall starry Galileo trail  
Initials like the comet's tail?  
What proud abbreviation beats  
In splendor the curt name of Keats?  
How choicelier had Horace writ  
Could he have sign'd his odes D. Litt.?  
And what diploma, pray, invent  
For Master William Shakespeare, Gent.?

## THE HAPPY TEACHER

---

Commensals of the Table Round,  
Careless they sit about the board  
With bread of angels whitely spread,  
Churl, Seneschal, and Knight and  
Lord;  
Invisibly the best is crown'd:  
Where Arthur sits, there is the head.

Ah! wouldst thou yeoman service do  
In that Republic where the great,  
Through strength in large endeavor  
spent,  
Achieve the Freedom of the State,  
Put childish things away,—pursue  
“The things that are more excel-  
lent.”

No flowery phraser is our hero,  
Like Seneca (they say) to Nero;  
Teaches to be a self-commander,  
As Aristotle, Alexander.



## MANHOOD

---

He suckles (for the teacher good  
Begins at least with babyhood!)  
With milk of humankindness Byron;  
And, like Thessalians coach'd by Chiron  
(That pedagogue quadrupedantic),  
His young barbarians grow less frantic,  
Their college yells and track events  
Well intersperst with wit and sense;  
While football stars, those padded giants,  
To letters condescend, and science.

Unbought, unmortgaged, unsubdued  
To the commercial age's mood,  
He nourishes ambition higher  
Than that of Carthage and of Tyre;  
Nor presbyter nor pontiff he  
In temple of Publicity;  
Withholds from king of street and pit  
The tax that pays the hypocrite;  
Impracticable to refuse  
To truck and trim for revenues;

And setting little store by knowledge  
Of arts to advertise his college.

Seldom his heart upon his sleeve  
He wears: not careful to relieve  
That organ of its perilous stuff  
By cuppings, innocent enough,  
Of frequent, brief communication  
To *Athenæum* or *The Nation*,  
As who should say, "The deuce is in't  
Unless I air myself in print!"  
Leaves unperturb'd the spirits vexed  
That squeak and gibber through the  
text

Shakespearean,—such matters nice  
Best left to Furness, Wright, and Dyce.  
Why prod our *precious square of sense*,  
Not *senselesse of the bob*, from thence  
To shed upon confusion still  
No light, but darkness visible?  
"Let *bends adornings* stand," he cries,

“THE BRAN OF SCHOLARSHIP”

---

“*An arm-gaunt steed, runawayes eyes,  
To his owne scandle,—be it so;  
Woo’t drinke up Esill?—Goodness, no!  
Who rashly hawk from handsaw plucks  
Gets finger-bitten: crux is crux.*”

“Ah! hold not to the hungry lip  
For bread the bran of scholarship,  
Nor to the thirsty spirit thus  
Commend the cup of Tantalus,  
And out upon those doctors who  
What wiser Shakespeare does, undo!  
‘Budge doctors of the stoic fur,’  
Who with their paltry glosses blur  
The authentic writing on the wall,  
The soul’s fair parchment so bescrawl  
With futile warrant, fool’s behest,  
That scripture turns to palimpsest.  
And indignation fires the verse  
When bungling meddlers, learning’s  
curse,

## THE HAPPY TEACHER

---

Refashion youth's diviner feature  
In the smug image of the teacher."  
A stronger breath was in that strain,  
But now I pluck the string again,  
Recalling Milton's patience scanty  
With wolves within the fold, — how  
Dante

Turn'd upside down the pride of place  
Of Clement and of Boniface.  
Those Pastors—

"Stop!" the Goddess cried,  
"Thy wit to madness is allied!  
Why shouldst thou fare so far afield?  
Does not the time example yield?  
The elder poets why invoke  
To lift our spiritual yoke?  
Sir Philip put the case aright:  
'Fool, look within thy heart and write!'  
And wouldst thou be a satirist  
Of prejudices that persist

## DISCOMMODITY OF SATIRE

---

In education, dying hard,  
Presume not to escape unscarr'd.  
Shalt see the friend become the foe;  
Thy fame a football, to and fro  
Bandied; no longer free to live  
The scholar's life contemplative,  
Thou must exchange for rancorous  
    strife

The sweet amenities of life,  
And in the arena force perforce  
Must battle amid bawlings hoarse;  
Perchance beneath calumnious stain  
Must die,—best effort spent in vain,  
For when was ever satire found  
To rail the seal from off the bond?  
Dost thou conceit thee to be steel'd  
To bear the brunt of such a field?  
Friend, let me whisper to thee that  
Thou'rt not the bard to bell the cat,  
For none has rim'd me such an opus  
Since Chaucer stinted of Sir Thopas:

## THE HAPPY TEACHER

---

False cadences and meter cramp,  
Allusion smelling of the lamp:  
Thy Muse should be a stocking blue!  
Now, as I point the path, pursue.”

Then to my song the Goddess lent  
Numbers and nobler argument: —

## II

Who is the Happy Teacher one would  
choose

To mould the plastic mind?—began the  
Muse.

One first, to speak with Bacon, who, a  
brave

Iconoclast of idols of the cave,

Well knows the mind's insidious perils,  
knows

To front undauntedly the inward foes;

Who, since the young his prime attention  
claim,

To make himself mature directs his  
aim;

When most his commerce is with chil-  
dren, then

Efficient most among his fellow-men;

Scornful of badges, decorations, toys

## THE HAPPY TEACHER

---

That prove men oft more puerile than  
boys;  
And smiling at each shibboleth and fad  
That show again much learning maketh  
mad.

Wide as his commerce with his fellows, so  
World-wide his intercourse with those  
who know,  
Sages and bards of many lands: these  
three  
For choice,—Greece, England, Italy;  
The calm free soul of Goethe; and in  
France  
Montaigne, who smiles away intolerance;  
Nor schooling mean at home here had he  
won  
From Franklin, Hawthorne, Whitman,  
Emerson.  
Happily born to manners, though but  
rude,



“THE HARVEST OF A QUIET EYE”

---

Sincere, he nourishes in solitude  
Instincts undreamt of in our social state  
Which civilizes but to enervate.  
Deep in the wilderness he steels his nerve  
The wild-brook's temper, strenuous to  
serve

At call. Forsaking academic ease  
Reads vagrantly in Nature's libraries,  
A wandering scholar; from the evening  
sky

Reaping “the harvest of a quiet eye.”  
Surprising beauty finds an open door  
Into his senses, custom-blunt before;  
And with the quicken'd vision of the  
brain,

Genius beholds within the forest-fane  
Wing'd acolytes with ministry divine  
Light up the candelabra of the pine.

What though courageous, yet no man of  
blood,

## THE HAPPY TEACHER

---

He murders not the natives of the wood,  
Begrudging to no life beneath the sun  
Its harmless day: a fowler without gun,  
A fisher innocent of rod and hook,  
Friends with the citizens of bush and  
brook.

From close communion with the forest  
clan  
Return'd, he better serves his fellow-man;  
Imbues the young whom he instructs to  
bless,  
With holy pity, tender thoughtfulness:  
With reverence they look to him, and  
love,  
As having bread to eat they know not of.

That art itself is nature, Shakespeare, who  
Deriv'd his sovran art from Nature, knew.  
And so by Nature tutor'd and by Art,  
Our Master, catholic in taste and heart,

Admires the virtue of the Greek no less  
Perchance, than Mediæval holiness;  
A fugue of Bach, the forest wind or bird,  
Sad Beethoven, and singing river, heard  
With equal passion; truth and beauty he  
Sees blent in exquisite economy;  
Sees oak and obelisk and painted cliff  
All historied with speaking hieroglyph;  
Cell, feeler, hoof, claw, cunning hand en-  
scroll  
The legend beautiful that ends in soul.

Such readings prompt his genius to stir  
Receptive hearts, a large interpreter  
Of letters, gathering from brae and brook  
Some pregnant comment bearing on the  
book,—  
The book, notation of the music heard  
First from the mother's tender lip, the  
Word:  
The word, a document wherein survives

## THE HAPPY TEACHER

---

The record of a myriad myriad lives;  
The word, the true foundation of the  
    school,  
Logician's and philosopher's sole tool,  
The matrix of the idea, which, having  
    not,  
We fail to level with the Hottentot:  
If there be any yet conceited wise  
In their own generation, who despise  
The word, be they to alien tongue con-  
    fin'd,  
To learn the weakness of the wordless  
    mind!  
The word, the pigment of the poet's art,  
The word, that speaks the fulness of the  
    heart,  
The winged word, like arrow to the goal,  
Stinging to action the lethargic soul,  
The current word, the idiom of the street,  
The coin of quick exchange with all we  
    meet;

“WORDS, WORDS, WORDS”

---

The fitting word, high culture's final test;  
The pungent word of graphic tale and  
    jest,  
The flavoring lemon in the punch of  
    wit,  
So apt,—and yet so easy *not* to hit!

But why should we, inheriting the tongue  
That Lincoln spake, the word that Shelley sung,  
The word that out of Milton's mintage  
    sprang,  
Debase the coinage with the dross of  
    slang,  
Whose pinchbeck lustre all is second-  
    hand,—  
Not coin but counters, current with the  
    band  
Of slavish spirits, to those chains resign'd  
That cramp the imperial stature of the  
    mind!

## THE HAPPY TEACHER

---

I sing the word beginning once with  
God,  
Milestone of backward road from man to  
clod,  
The word "whose fountain who shall  
tell?" and whence  
Pours Homer's ample flood of eloquence;  
The ballad word which, sung by crowder  
blind,  
Thrill'd like a trumpet noble Sidney's  
mind;  
The homely word of Paston Letters old,  
Wherein men pray, blaspheme, make  
love, and scold,  
Limning the features, as in sculpture  
rude,  
That witness to our common brother-  
hood;  
The liquid word whose music Chaucer  
woke  
In that vernacular of English folk;

The living word, redeeming still from  
death

“The spacious times of great Elizabeth”:  
Wipe but the dust from parchment and  
from roll,

The word leaps forth to life, a thing of  
soul,

Working such wonders as, when rust and  
damp

Were rubb'd away, the Genius of the  
Lamp.

Hail then the word: the talisman, the  
key,

Divining wand and open sesame,  
Blood pulsing through one mental lin-  
eage,

Seal of one plastic spirit's heritage!  
The word, the fossil dead? Nay, these  
outlive

Organic life, of lease so fugitive:

## THE HAPPY TEACHER

---

And as from fossil teeth, forgot of Time,  
For Cuvier woke the monsters of the  
prime,  
Awakes, at runic Hempl's charm, the  
tongue  
The Etrurian shades forgot when Time  
was young.

Thus Nature, Wisdom, Poetry combine  
In words to touch the soul to issues  
fine.  
And as perspective art the landscape  
shows,  
The Master's pencil round the lesson  
throws  
Color, relief of distance, atmosphere.  
His virtuous euphrasy can purge and  
clear  
The inner vision for effect and cause;  
He points Imagination's lens, and  
draws



## THE PLAY-HOUSE

---

Into concernment close the past, the far:  
Turn but the glass,—the near becomes a  
star!

The customary grows miraculous,  
While Plutarch's heroes eat and drink  
with us.

A mighty Play-House is the Universe  
Wherein we all our little parts rehearse:  
For footlights, planets,—suns the chan-  
deliers;

The overture, the music of the spheres;  
The curtain is the all-concealing night:  
It rises, and the scene is infinite;  
Actors, spectators we; intrigues unfold  
Significant; we in the Deed behold  
A lineage unsubjected to the tomb  
Stretch out, like Banquo's, to the crack  
of doom;

Incident, burgeoning from incident,  
Into the vast economy is blent;

## THE HAPPY TEACHER

---

The villain foils the hero, and the theme  
Draws to a climax; is the Author's scheme  
Comic or tragical? We can but know  
The tragic moment of our present woe,  
Dimly forebode some dread catastrophe;  
Till, pity and terror purging us, we see  
Perchance with eye prophetic; hear the  
chime

Heralding from the horologe the Time  
Foretold by seer and poet: life no more  
An aimless struggle in the dark; no war,  
No fetters but for selfishness; with awe  
Hear proclamation of the reign of Law,  
Deeming we faintly hear from far above  
The golden wedding-bells of Law and  
Love.

So seeing, hearing, would he not, our  
Youth,  
“Live resolute in wholeness, beauty,  
truth”?

## KATHARSIS

---

And in what after-apathy could choose  
A scene less haloed with ideal hues?  
So let each see and live, in view of All  
Until the Author lets the curtain fall!

### III

SHE paus'd, and holding forth the lyre,  
Bended her flashing eye on mine.  
“Dear Muse, far from thee to require  
My song to follow: more condign  
Were punishment on me for this,  
Than fell on blinded Thamyris!”  
So pray'd I. “When thy voice outspake  
That prophecy, my heart was stirr'd;  
Do thou again the chords awake,—  
Let mellow music now be heard.  
Against the night that glooms the Pole  
Auroral banners are unfurl'd:  
Fixt be the waverings,—my soul  
Stares blankly on the changing world.  
The curtain of the coming age  
Be parted for a moment! Purge  
The inward eye to view a stage  
Where Love shall be the dramaturge.

Reeling and dizzy here below  
A starless sky, we look above  
For light in vain: how can we know  
That Law shall ever mate with Love?  
With microscope we dimly scan  
One universe,—with telescope  
The other,—spying out for man  
What satisfying grounds of hope?  
For man here, like the burrowing mole  
With level aims and inchlong views,  
What vista of the mighty whole  
May be without the heavenly Muse?  
Tell, is the Happy Teacher blind  
To toil for human betterment?  
For Hope what warrant may he find?"

To my petition gave consent  
The Goddess, with a kindly smile:  
And though the rime indignant rang  
With hoarse invective for awhile,  
Yet sweetlier afterward she sang:

#### IV

“O BREASTS, where are ye, of all life the  
source?”

Thus, with poor Faust, while Trade pur-  
sues her course,

I hear the unborn generations groan,  
Who, crying out for bread, receive a  
stone.

No longer underneath the forest thatch  
Flow waters (but the smoker has his  
match!);

A sewer in the shrunken river's bed  
Festers (what then? the hungry press is  
fed:

I venture no allusion, speaking thus,  
Comparison would be malodorous),  
Or else the torrent, mocking human toil,  
Sweeps to the sea the harvest and the  
soil.

## TREASON TO POSTERITY

---

Has Earth no vengeance, have the Heav-  
ens no curse

For him who by destruction fills his  
purse?

Let actuaries calculate the worth

Of him who, dying, poorer leaves the  
earth:

Carve the hard face, that coming man  
may see

The cruel features of his enemy!

Hark! by the noble soul distinctly heard,

Out of those marble lips escapes the Word

That sacrifice of self for those unborn

Is worship which the gods will never  
scorn.

Who makes the world his oyster, leaves  
it dead

And done with, soon as ever he has fed,—

Who sucks the juice and chucks away the  
shell,—

Should find no fellowship except in Hell

## THE HAPPY TEACHER

---

Where Dante found the traitors winter-  
ing,—  
Congenial spirits for the Lumber King.

Ofttimes our Master, haunted by the  
theme  
Of our unnatural *unsocial* scheme,  
With corded brow forwent his wonted  
cheer,  
Foreboding Revolution drawing near:  
Cast to the melting-pot in vision saw  
The time-worn brazen tablets of the law;  
Religion's reverend landmarks overborne;  
The metes and bounds of mine and thine  
uptorn;  
Fair arts of man's long, long endeavor,  
melt  
In one black hell-broth. This, he deeply  
felt,  
Is fault of those who throng the drawing-  
room



Of Empress Grundy, and applaud her  
doom

On all who dare to think; the fault of  
those

Who batten upon superstition, foes  
Of all experiment; of those who exalt  
Their fortunes upon ruin'd hopes; the  
fault

Of great industrial captains, skill'd to  
roll

Up dividends by scaling down the soul;  
Of statesmen strenuous to make the most  
Of public taste for moral tea and toast;  
Of Aarons with lawn sleeves wherein to  
laugh

When bows the world before the Golden  
Calf;

Of priests who point the penitent rich a  
road

Around the Needle's Eye,—the poor a  
code

## THE HAPPY TEACHER

---

Of iron, rubricated *Thou Shalt Not*:  
These fan the flame beneath the melting-  
pot!

Beyond such cataclysm, by faith he saw  
Freedom arisen, born of Inward Law,—  
It is unlawful, bard and prophet say,  
That he who knows, should other law  
obey!

An age draws on of equal chance for all,  
Knowledge and gentle manners general,  
When Science lengthens life,—a peaceful  
death

The lot of every being drawing breath,—  
The sting of death gone with the ghost of  
sin;

Few courts of law, because the law within  
Prescribes the golden rule of equal rights,  
And Freedom quells destructive appe-  
tites;

In wiser mating man and woman blent

## A GLIMPSE OF THE FUTURE

---

Harmonious like voice and instrument;  
Age when emancipated womankind  
No more a serpent in the garden find,  
No angel brandishing a sword of fire  
Above the Paradise of Heart's Desire;  
When common purposes, affection high  
Alone shall consecrate the nuptial tie;  
And parenthood shall know but one dis-  
    grace, —

To breed a child not bettering the race.  
Such vision through the gate of horn he  
    saw,

Exulting in the true Utopia.

“What,” some will ask, “what of the life  
    to come?”

He, like the kings of modern thought is  
    dumb,

Never affirming what he cannot know,  
Still less denying, for he hopes it so.  
To theologic warfare calls a truce, —

## THE HAPPY TEACHER

---

A different Bannockburn demands its  
Bruce,

Blares forth to us another trumpet-call;  
On harder quest must go Sir Percival,  
By consecration to the race attest  
He guards the Holy Grail within his  
breast.

No follower and no flatterer of the crowd,  
Not foremost in the synagogue is bow'd  
Our Teacher, giving alms unseen of  
men, —

Shouts not upon the housetop his Amen!  
Yet when Hosannah to the Lord on High,  
With voice of many waters people cry,  
Than he, none feels the common impulse  
more:

But, praying, goes within, and shuts the  
door.

Deep in the heart he keeps a Holy Shrine:  
There looks he, not in vain, for the Di-  
vine.

As one who owns a little plot of ground,  
Owns underneath as far as drill can sound,  
And downward howsoever far he go,  
Comes on fresh veins upwelling from below,

While farther down, conceal'd from human sight,

Are springs of power and riches infinite:  
Thus underneath our little minds we hold,  
Deep under deep, resources manifold,  
And man (all men, beneath their surface selves)

Antæus-like, grows stronger as he delves;  
If any one a deeper stratum tap,  
We term him Genius; could you mine and sap

And tunnel till the deep of deeps you trod,—

What then? You syllable sublimely,—  
God!

Thence, in the solitude, an effluence

## THE HAPPY TEACHER

---

Streams up from fountains far beneath  
the sense,  
Monitions, from the roots of Being sent,  
Of issues growing to Divine Event,  
Impermanence becoming permanent.

## V

SUCH was the gospel, the good news  
Prophetical that sang the Muse;  
While yet the chords were sounding on,  
I lookt, and lo! the Muse was gone.  
So left, I cannot fitly word  
The mood whereto my heart was stirred;  
For who am I that I take up  
The lyre the Heavenly Muse let drop?  
No harmony could I command,—  
The strings would snap beneath my hand.

Wanting the Muse,—these verses show  
it,—

One may be rimer, never Poet;  
Nor do the wise the proverb scorn  
That poets are not made, but born;  
Nor yet that other commonplace,  
How bards their birthright oft disgrace!

## THE HAPPY TEACHER

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To voices strange the Goddess grants  
The burden of her utterance:  
Half-frenzied voices, Blake or Smart,  
Their lucid madness passing art;  
Weak Coleridge or weak Rousseau;  
Sick Heine, Leopardi, Poe;  
Decadent Villon or Verlaine;  
Witness wild Byron's wondering strain, —  
"And must thy lyre, so long divine,  
Degenerate into hands like mine?"  
Her burden trembling in his voice,  
The saddest poet may rejoice;  
But when the Muse has passed along,  
The sweetest harp is left unstrung.

So Peter, James, and John of yore  
Saw God transfigured: fishermen  
Poor, humble, had they been before,  
And after seem'd the like again;  
Beheld no more the raiment bright  
That in such hour the Master wore,



## PALINODE

---

Heard talking with him on the height  
Moses, Elijah, nevermore:  
But oh! the wonder and the awe  
Of what that once they heard and saw!

Before the wonder cease to thrill  
(Hark to the cadence sounding still!)  
Friends, pardon, while in minor mode,  
The rimer hums his Palinode.  
Alas! it is the Poet's shame  
That what he dream'd, he ne'er be-  
came.

"I see, approve the good, the worse  
I follow,—" So the famous verse  
Doth moralize Medea's woes;  
And so our Portia, but in prose,—  
"Were it as easy do the best  
As know it,—" wherefore quote the rest?  
A modern instance,—what we knew  
And lov'd, we mostly fail'd to do.  
A truant, I in Nature's school

## THE HAPPY TEACHER

---

Made no exception to the rule  
That thought no master-key to act is,  
Nor precept magnet to right practise;  
Could not through all my course control

The needle wavering from the Pole;  
Unlike the Priest who, poets say,  
“Allur’d to Heaven and led the way!”

To melancholy thought a truce!  
The Poet finds a better use  
In Parable, and finer grace.  
Recall the Athenian torch-race,—  
The race of the lampadephore:  
The start was from the fire-god’s door;  
The goal, Acropolis; the night  
Moonless; the runners took their light  
From the Promethean altar: then  
Between the craning files of men,  
Along the glittering portico  
(But softly, softly here, because

Of certain whiffs and gusty flaws! ),  
Through street, through Agora they  
go

Racing, intent to keep the torch  
Symbolic, burning to the last;  
And while the foremost nears the hill,  
The hindmost, not the least in skill,  
Is striding by the Painted Porch,  
The flame defending with the finger,  
And curbs himself, appears to linger  
Reluctant, lest he run too fast:  
For, should the cresset, flickering dim,  
Be puft out by a counterblast,  
Runner, however fleet of limb,  
Halts,—Nemesis o’ertaking him!

A band of seven, avoiding this,  
Run up the steep Acropolis,  
Steadily mounting high and higher;  
The Propylæa reflect the fire  
Until the polisht statues bright

## THE HAPPY TEACHER

---

Gleam out like specters through the  
night.

“Ah! could one name the sevenfold  
crew!”

“Look! now there are but five in  
view!”

The others? ask the treacherous wind!

“Now four,—now three,—and now but  
two!”

But look again! One far behind  
Who crept by wall, and nurst his  
breath,

Safeguarding still the flame from death,  
Now darts from hiding, grasps the  
chance,

Gains on the foremost,—who (perchance  
Already clutching for the meed

Which not so lightly Nike grants!)

Was flagging when supreme the need

To run, to run!—and with a burst

Of speed, behold, the last, now first,

Flashes along with lamp not dull,  
Enters the Gateway beautiful,  
And stands: —to him award the crown.

Moral? What boot to write it down?—  
The race not always to the swift!  
To him who guards of gifts the gift,  
The fire, the fire Promethean  
The pitying Titan flung to man,  
The sacred torch, the mystic sign  
Of that within we call divine,  
Until the shining goal is won,  
To him the guerdon be, “Well done!”

Oh! could some brave lampadephore  
Of tougher sinew, stouter soul,  
Swift flaming forward where I  
swerv’d,  
Have borne my cresset to the goal,—  
Amid the pæan’s wild uproar  
What praise had such as I deserv’d?

## THE HAPPY TEACHER

---

Few trace the record dim beneath  
The statue of the victor set,  
Where on the very plinth they write  
The name of one men best forget,  
Who, though the winner of no wreath,  
Once held the sacred torch alight.

*Explicit*







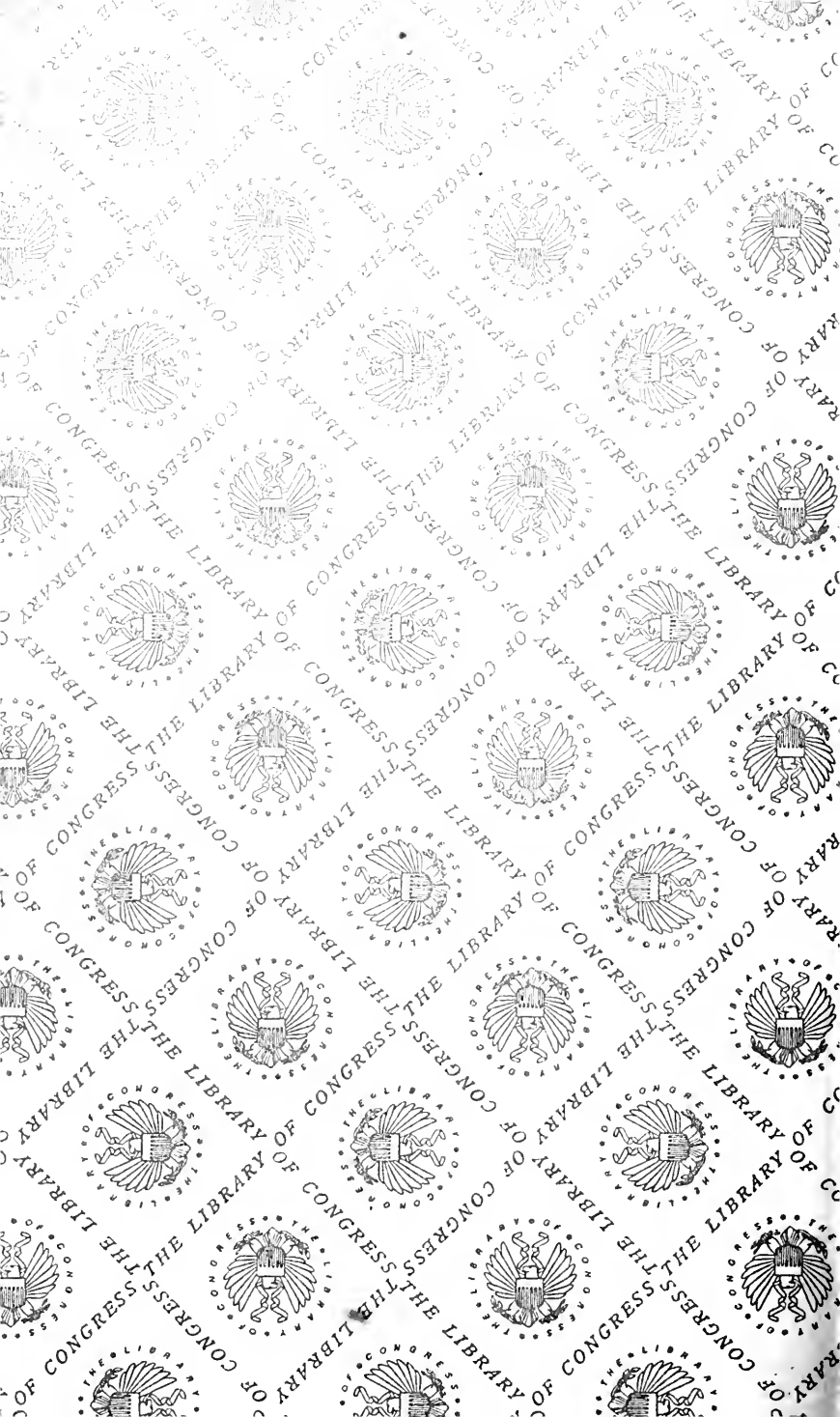


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